DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 378 285 UD 030 265

AUTHOR	Brisk, Maria Estela; And Others
TITLE	Portraits of Success: Resources Supporting Bilingual Learners.
INSTITUTION	Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education, Jamaica Plain.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	32p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education, P.O. Box 503, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 ($3; 10 for $20).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Adults; *Bilingual Education; Case Studies; Chinese Americans; College Bound Students; Elementary Secondary Education; English; *High School Graduates; Hispanic Americans; *Limited English Speaking; *Native Language Instruction; Teaching Methods; *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

The lives of accomplished bilingual adults who were educated in Massachusetts schools are reviewed to analyze the role of transitional bilingual education (TBE) in their lives. The 12 adults interviewed, chosen not as a representative sample, but because they have succeeded in life, attended bilingual education in Massachusetts, generally in urban areas, at elementary or secondary levels. All have gone on to successful careers, and all are fully bilingual. Two case studies, that of a Chinese-American student who entered the bilingual program in second grade and that of a student from the Dominican Republic who entered bilingual education in high school, are presented in detail. Factors that made a difference in the elementary education of bilingual students were found to be: (1) native language development; (2) native language use in content areas; (3) intensive English instruction; (4) participation in accelerated programs; (5) qualified bilingual teachers; and (6) supportive peers. At the secondary level, similar factors, as well as activities supporting college preparation, were found. One figure and one table illustrate the discussion. (Contains 13 references.) (SLD)

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Portraits of Success:

Resources Supporting Bilingual Learners

by
Maria Estela Brisk

in Collaboration with

Linda Taylor, Laura Carter
and Chiharu Kobayashi

A Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education Monograph
1994

Acknowledgments

Over twenty years since the implementation of the Transitional Bilingual Education Act of Massachusetts, the voices of the graduates of this program are brought forth in this monograph. This project was the result of the efforts of a number of people. Dr. Virginia Vogel Zanger, president of M.A.B.E. (Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education), suggested the idea, identified some of the graduates, and assisted in editing the monograph. Other bilingual teachers and community members suggested additional names and helped in contacting the graduates. The graduates provided plenty of time in their very busy schedules to tell their stories. The students enrolled in my course, Educational Issues in Bilingualism, at Boston University, conducted the interviews. Laura Carter, Marie Cethoute, Hsiu-ling Chen, Marina Cocconi, Wenxia Diao, Alicia Fuentes, Chiharu Kobayahsi, Auguestes Kwaa, Zaida Rivera, Susan Schwartz, Timothy Sheehan, Yu Soung, Linda Taylor, Celeste White and Yi-Fei Zhu. Alicia Fuentes, Wenxia Diao, Linda Taylor, Laura Carter and Chiharu Kobayashi spent additional hours analyzing the data to reduce it to monograph format. Geri Hickey helped typing parts of the manuscript. Linda, Laura and Chiharu endured to the end and justly share in the authorship.

– Maria Estela Brisk, Ph.D.

Table 1: Study Participants

Name	Present Occupation	Place of Birth	First Language	Grades Attended TBE Program Full-time	Partially Mainstreamed
Helena	Business	United States	Greek	K-2	3-5
Noemia	Community housing agency	Cape Verde	Cape Verdean	5-6[1]	
Luciano	Lawyer	Cape Verde	Cape Verdean	5[1]	
Vy	College student	Vietnam	Vietnamese	3-5	
Linh	College student	Vietnam	Vietnamese	3-4[2]	5
Chang *(featured case study)*	College student	Vietnam	Vietnamese	3-4	5
Maria Cristina	Legislative aide, T.V. producer	Puerto Rico	Spanish	7-9	10-12
Elisa	Admin. assistant, public school	Puerto Rico	Spanish	3-8	9-12[3]
Felicia	School administrator	Cape Verde	Cape Verdean	7-9	10-12
Alfredo	Technician at a Boston hospital	Honduras	Spanish	9-10	11-12
Mae	Computer engineer	Hong Kong	Cantonese/Mandarin	9	10-12[4]
Patricia *(featured case study)*	Businesswoman/homemaker	Dominican Republic	Spanish	9-10	11-12

Notes:

[1]Transferred to a Catholic school

[2]Attended a monolingual program 1-2

[3]Mainstreamed but took courses in the TBE program

[4]Chinese bilingual program was moved to a different school

Introduction

In the last seven years, the population of bilingual students[1] in Massachusetts has increased by 89 percent.[2] Less than half of these, 40,000, are in transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, in 18 languages. If education reform is to succeed for *all* students in the Commonwealth, the needs and strengths of bilingual students must be understood and met.

The purpose of this monograph is to review the lives of accomplished bilingual adults who were educated in Massachusetts as children. Our goal is to present a vivid account from those who, as children or adolescents, were served by bilingual education and to analyze the role of TBE in the context of their lives. For this study we did not seek to identify a "representative sample" of TBE graduates. Rather, we purposefully selected bilingual individuals who had achieved academic and career success. Through analyzing their reflections, we hoped to learn about the factors that contributed to their success.

All 12 individuals interviewed attended bilingual education programs in Massachusetts either at the elementary or secondary school level. A number of TBE graduates were contacted from lists provided by bilingual teachers. Although everybody was willing to be interviewed, logistics and time constraints on the part of interviewers and interviewees guided the final selection. Our informants came from different parts of the world, entering the program at different grade levels (see Table 1). All of them went on to have successful career and personal experiences. All of them are fully bilingual and make use of their bilingualism at home and at work. Most attended bilingual education programs for between three to five years.[3] Each individual was interviewed twice at length. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The data was analyzed following the framework of resources adapted from Alva.[4] In this monograph we present at length two of the case studies: Chang,[5] who arrived in Massachusetts as a child entering

[1]In this paper the term *bilingual student* will refer to students who have a native language other than English and who are at various stages of the development of English, but who still do not function at the level of native speakers.

[2]Barra, N.C., Raupp, M. & Zuman, J.P. (1992). *The State of Bilingual Education in Massachusetts.* Arlington, MA: Intercultural Center for Research in Education, Inc.

[3]Exceptions were Luciano and Noemia, whose parents transferred them to a parochial school after less than two years in the public schools to avoid the unrest brought about by desegregation.

[4]Alva, S.A. (1991). Academic invulnerability among Mexican-American students: The Importance of protective resources and appraisals. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 13,* 18-34.

[5]The names of the interviewees are pseudonyms used to protect their privacy.

the bilingual program in the second grade; and Patricia, who came ready to start high school.By viewing the total experience of these two individuals the reader can understand the interaction of the resources which contributed to their success, as well as the distinctive experiences of young children and adolescents. Data from the other students is included in the analysis of resources following the case studies

According to Alva personal and environmental "protective resources" mediate for potentially at-risk students in their quest for academic success. Using Alva's framework of protective resources our analysis of the life experiences of these 12 individuals revealed the importance of a number of resources contributing to their success. Environmental resources we found included family, church, and neighborhood. We further identified a number of personal characteristics which were important resources as well. Among these were strong academic and native language background, motivation to maintain native language and culture as well as to learn English, and other attitudinal factors. Our analysis of educational resources distinguished between elementary and secondary contexts. Within this framework, we were able to identify which aspects of their TBE experiences students found to be supportive, and which were problematic.

We found the factors that made a difference in the elementary level education of bilingual students included: native language development, native language use in the content areas, intensive English instruction, participation in accelerated programs, qualified bilingual teachers and supportive peers. At the secondary level, we found similar factors as well as additional resources such as college preparatory courses, high teacher expectations and other academic as well as extracurricular resources. One weakness of the school experience was a lack of acceptance for the bilingual program, its staff, and students by the school at large.

Featured Case Studies

Chang: Elementary TBE Student

Chang's parents are from China, but he was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the U.S. with his extended family. He attended a bilingual program from 3rd to 5th grade, entered an accelerated middle school program, and went on to Boston Latin Academy for his high school education. He is presently completing an engineering degree at Boston University.

Chang volunteers as a tutor and mentor for Vietnamese students from a local high school. He considers himself very lucky to have both cultures and languages, and gratefully credits the bilingual program with helping him to keep the traditions. The following section offers an abridged version of two lengthy interviews with Chang. He discusses his family and values, his bilingual program, its teachers and the program structure, his language use today, and his tutoring/mentoring work with Vietnamese immigrants.

Family

Chang spoke with a smile about his nuclear and extended family's presence in the US. "My parents were from China, and I guess our whole family moved to Vietnam and then that's where I was born, and then we came here in 1980." He remembered the date clearly: "March 26, 1980... the whole family arrived together, my parents and my older sister and my two younger sisters and younger brother..." Much of his extended family is also in the United States: "Well, my grandparents' family also come over, my uncles and aunts... my father has, I believe, eight brothers and three sisters, and then they all have their own families, so it's a whole lot of people [laughs]. It's a really big family, right..."

His family is trilingual. "I speak both languages [Chinese and Vietnamese] ...but I am kind of more fluent in Vietnamese, because I know how to read and write in Vietnamese, but only know how to speak Chinese. My parents speak very little English, and so my brothers and sisters or I would be there to translate, and to help them out. They came here and started working and so they didn't have time to go to school."

His family strongly values education. "At home, my parents, especially my father... He wants us to learn and be successful in life. If he see us doing nothing, he tells us to take out our homework and try to

practice it instead of spending time watching TV too much, or go out and play. He tell us to sit down, take out a book, and read and practice... sometimes he'd ask, 'what does this word in Vietnamese mean in English?' and we would tell him, and if not, we'd go up and look in the dictionary. He pushed us a lot..."

Education

Chang remembered with clarity his first day in an American school and repeatedly expressed his gratitude for his bilingual class and Vietnamese classmates. "When first I came here, I did not know any English at all and I had no idea even to say hello at all... I did not feel comfortable at first, because I thought I'm heading into an all-American class, until I realized there are some people, some Vietnamese people, around that I can relate to..." He added, "...if you had put me in a regular class, and you sit me in a regular class, I think that I would feel as if I was a rock."

Chang looks back fondly at his years in the bilingual program, remembering the teachers, their methods, the subjects they taught and the materials they used, as well as his friends and classmates. He is firmly convinced that the bilingual classroom helped him academically. "...if I were to head into regular class, then I think I would not learn as much as I would in a bilingual program. English is a very difficult language and we had to start with a lot of language work..." The program helped him emotionally as well: "In the third grade, I had to start out with the alphabet... knowing that other students were at the same level was not as embarrassing as it would be in a regular class."

The usual range of subjects was taught to the bilingual program students: "She gave us quizzes and tests at the end. She teaches science, math, all this stuff, and history..." For the most part, English textbooks and materials were used in subject area instruction, "...there were some textbooks in Vietnamese..." He was also taught Vietnamese reading and writing to support what he had learned in Vietnam before emigrating. "The Vietnamese bilingual program also teaches Vietnamese as well, so I picked up a lot of Vietnamese in the program, too. So now I know how to read and write in Vietnamese."

After he finished fourth grade in the bilingual program, he and a small group of the bilingual program students were invited to join an accelerated program in Language Arts for native speakers of English. "...there's an advanced class for regular students... I guess that my teachers saw that I had improved in English... it was a couple of hours,

I think two or three days a week..."

He spoke with a smile about the teachers in the bilingual program, saying, "with a Vietnamese teacher, it helped a lot..." He emphasized his respect for them: "The teachers were really good, I mean, they were really good. They want us to learn English fast... the [bilingual] teachers...they were very helpful...without them, I don't think I would have survived... They're wonderful..." They were also very demanding. "I guess they really pushed us...but sometimes, you know, they pushed us to a point that we think that we really hate them because I guess we were kids, so... teachers and students, you know the relationship...but the only thing they mean to do is just push you to do well." Chang is still in touch with them: "I still keep in contact with the teachers; I go to visit them every now and then..."

Chang's bilingual teachers played many roles in his education. They acted as translator: "She would translate it for you afterwards also... to make sure you get it right... make sure you understand it..." They also served as advocates. They were behind Chang's acceptance to an advanced English language arts class offered for native speakers of English. Because they had high expectations for him they encouraged him to take a difficult course, but supported him when he had problems with content or communication. "The advanced class is really accelerated... it's really fast, and if there's problems, you know, we'd go back to her afterwards... we'd go back there afterwards and ask her for some help, and she would translate ... sometimes when we don't understand some stuff, we went back to our bilingual teacher and she would go talk to that advancement [*sic*] class teacher and would translate..." Finally, the teachers were also role models: "they understood what we went through because they went through it themselves, learning English and coming to America."

A crucial component of the bilingual program was the camaraderie and support he derived from his Vietnamese classmates. "Fellow [Vietnamese] students and you, you can talk to them and play with them at recess; and with studying, you can also share trying to converse with each other, and if you don't understand, then you can turn back to Vietnamese, and you can talk in Vietnamese..."

In contrast, relations with American students proved a lot more painful. There were problems both during recess and in the mainstream classes. "At recess, you would find that there would be some arguments between American and Vietnamese, because we *were* kids, and you

know how ignorant kids can be sometimes. There would be some racial slurs and stuff like that, and not knowing English you wouldn't know what they were talking about..." When he first joined a class of native speakers, he met laughter at his accent and language with great equanimity: "... the teacher would have to stop the class and tell them I am not any good at English, and I just came here and so...they shouldn't be doing what they were doing, but I don't mind, because I understand that it would happen, and how they felt..."

When he finished elementary school, he was invited to join an advanced mainstream program at the middle school. He attributes this selection to this program to his willingness to work hard and learn, rather than innate ability. "They have this teacher who teaches the advancement class, and I guess she went to talk to the teachers...to see if [they] have any students who're willing to learn..." In spite of Chang's qualities as a student and personal strength of character, the transition to a 6th grade English classroom was difficult. "I was kind of very shaky about going into a regular class for the first time but I had grasped some English by then..." He explained some of the emotional disadvantages. "When you're in a bilingual program, you have your classmates, who are Vietnamese also, and you can really talk to them, but if you'd been in a regular class, then you felt like you are vulnerable, inside you felt like you can't do this, and if you say out something, if it doesn't sound right, they would laugh..."

Language Attitude and Use

Chang values his Vietnamese and Chinese languages and cultures. "I don't want to... now I realize that I don't really want to forget the whole thing; Vietnamese culture and the language, and I feel very lucky to still have that language in me... I like to keep the traditions, the Chinese and Vietnamese traditions. I just don't want to forget them." English is also important to him, and he studied very hard to acquire it. Even so it took five years before he felt comfortable: "Until I was in the eighth grade. That was when I felt that I could grasp English."

Today, Chang uses his multilingualism in different situations. "... in school, in class, of course, I speak English and at home I speak Vietnamese and Chinese... at Boston University, when I joined the Vietnamese Student Association, and when I talk to my Vietnamese friends, I will speak in Vietnamese, mixed with English, and when I go to work, I will speak Chinese, because I work in a Chinese restaurant... At home we use Chinese and Vietnamese. There's no pattern... I guess

it's when we know which word in Chinese, we use it and which word in Vietnamese, we use Vietnamese..."

When Chang attends church, he does so at one of two Catholic churches, the Vietnamese church in Brookline where, "They perform the ceremony in Vietnamese... there are Vietnamese fathers..." or the Chinese church in Chinatown.

Impact on the Next Generation

When Chang joined the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA), he was able to see what might have happened had he not had the bilingual program. "At BU, when I joined the Vietnamese Student Association, I basically speak Vietnamese to my friends and most of them still know how to speak Vietnamese, but there are a few of them, like two or three people, who just forgot their language, I guess, because they were born here or something like that so they didn't go to a bilingual program; they just go straight to the regular program. The only time they speak Vietnamese, I guess, is to their parents, and that's very little... they want to learn Vietnamese, and they found it very interesting that they forgot their own language. They want to learn more and so they try to find classes to go to..."

He was instrumental in convincing the VSA to establish a tutoring program for recent immigrants. "I know what I went through when I first came here... I suggested to them that we should have some kind of tutoring program for the newly arrived students. What we've arranged is two hours a day from 2-4 with some Brighton High students... [we planned] to help them with the subjects directly, but what we found out was that English is the major barrier... if they don't understand the directions then they wouldn't be able to do their homework..."

Chang sees many long-term positive academic and personal effects of the bilingual program. He was able to develop multiple languages, acquiring literacy in both English and Vietnamese. He is a well-adjusted bilingual/bicultural individual who likes American society and is very proud of his Chinese and Vietnamese background.

Case Study

Patricia: Secondary TBE student

Patricia came to Massachusetts in 1975 from the Dominican Re-

public when she was 14 years old. Her mother had arrived earlier to get a job. She worked very hard, found a place to live and then sent for Patricia and her older sister. The family lived in Jamaica Plain, in a Dominican neighborhood. Her mother didn't speak any English and so relied on friends in the neighborhood to interpret. "She always had a great network of friends there. She really associated in a Dominican neighborhood... "

The family joined a local Catholic parish that "helped us a lot." Mass was said in Spanish and Patricia and her sister joined the youth group which was very active in community service. "We used to go to a nursing home, we used to visit the sick, pray the rosary. That was really good."

After graduating from Boston College with a major in marketing, Patricia went on to work in business, both in the United States and her native country. Patricia is now a mother of five. With her American husband she is raising their children to be bilingual and bicultural. She speaks Spanish to them at home. She also maintains close relations with her family in the Dominican Republic and at the same time, develops her children's American identity.

Bilingual Education Experience

No one in Patricia's family spoke any English when they arrived. "I came here after going to a parochial school in the Dominican Republic until the eighth grade. I did not know any English when I came here. We were lucky to find a program." Patricia's mother enrolled her in a Transitional Bilingual Education program at a local high school. The program had an additional asset: a college preparatory program. Her mother believed it was essential that her children receive a good education. She carefully chose the program after it was recommended by friends. "We came here to go to school. My mother did not allow us to work. She had a goal and she said, 'I will work and you will go to school; you will study'." Her mother worked both full- and part-time jobs in order to support the family. "I think we learned a lot by seeing my mother working so hard. We had to do well, period. To see her working so hard you had to live up to that standard... I mean we were really gearing up to go to college, there was no doubt in my family that we had to go to college. You do it, period."

During the first two years of the program Patricia took all of her classes in Spanish, except for two English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. She remembers taking biology, algebra and health and two

English courses. Patricia found these courses as fairly easy. "I came from a very strong background in the Dominican Republic because I went to the parochial school there run by Carmelite nuns, and they were very strict. There, I had had physics and chemistry in the eighth grade. So when I came, I found the classes to be boring. I was reviewing." In retrospect, she appreciates that the courses taught in Spanish were easy because those in English were so hard. One of the ESL courses incorporated the use of photography. "Our teacher was great. He made language learning lots of fun." The class would photograph different areas of Boston. "It gave us great exposure to Boston. It was an incentive to learn about Boston and get out."

By the third year of the program, Patricia decided to challenge herself by choosing to take a course in English. It was not required that she do so, but she felt it was important to immerse herself in an English-speaking content area course, such as United States History, in order to improve her second language. "Once I learned English, I was less afraid than when I first began." Moreover, "it was a challenge to do it. We chose to go into English-speaking classrooms. I wanted more, some of my friends like Henry and Miguel, a lot of us did it."

At the same time, Patricia participated in the College Prep Program, which was called "Critical Reading and Writing." The teacher helped the students review the skills they had learned in the first two years of ESL courses by, "...preparing us to read and write papers. We would listen to the news at night, which is very difficult. Then we would write a letter and talk about it. I thought it was an excellent program. During award ceremony we were given special awards. So it [College Prep Program] was recognized by the school."

Patricia had not taken any Spanish grammar or language since her time in parochial school in the Dominican Republic. "That is one thing that I would encourage. There was no grammar, no Spanish grammar. I knew, because I kept speaking Spanish. I would read on my own in Spanish, but not everyone will do that. My mother always got us books and things like that because she wanted us to keep up our Spanish, but if you don't have that interest and you are so overwhelmed with everything else, it is hard to do."

Finally, the teacher who taught Spanish to American students developed a course for the Spanish-speaking students that was advanced and "...more challenging. We wrote papers, we read a lot. There was a lot of grammar and I liked that a lot. It was excellent. I think that class

should be offered to all Hispanics. Even now I would love to take a course like that and I'm sure I will. I mean we saw Unamuno, we saw a lot of [other] Spanish writers. The teacher concentrated on grammatical structure. It was offered to us, a group of us who were really interested in that and that is what really helped. To continue with your Spanish, but at a different level. You are keeping it and at the level which it was taught. That was very challenging."

The same teacher who taught the Spanish literature course had initially created the Spanish club. It began as a club for English-speaking American students to get together and practice their Spanish and have activities. Then some of the Hispanic students joined and the teacher "was so happy." The group began raising money to participate in field trips together. "We tried to speak Spanish with the American students who were learning... to introduce them to more of the culture. We used to take field trips: like to the Museum of Science, the Museum of Fine Arts. We would look at art and write a paper... It was an educational experience."

Patricia was a member of the National Honor Society for having a high grade point average. "We had a lot going on. It was good. And being in the city, now I'm thinking back, that if I were to have been in a private school, somewhat isolated, I probably wouldn't have had all that."

In addition to courses at the high school she took courses after school at local colleges. "I would leave one hour early and then go and take two classes, two times a week. It sort of prepared me for college too. At Northeastern I took calculus, and at Boston State College I think I took English." The "...same group of friends who were in the college prep class would go in the afternoons. I guess we were allowed to do anything related to school, as long as we were not 'working,' my mother said, 'go and take classes.' We had a good group of students. They would take the challenge if you gave it to them."

Except for one teacher who she thought was not well prepared, Patricia felt the teachers in the bilingual program were good. They were aware of the students' struggles and tried to help by facilitating their studies. "The teachers were good and I think when I look back, that it was sort of a balance that they made. They eased us into the American culture and into the language." In addition, the bilingual teachers went beyond teaching their academic discipline. "The teachers were just so giving. They would correct your essays [for college]. They would

help you. They would lend you a typewriter. They encouraged us to move on. You could come over [to their house]. I mean it was more than just the school. You had a lot of support. They did an excellent job!"

Some teachers helped bridge the gap between home and school. "I remember, I wanted to go to that summer program [Upward Bound] and my mother said: ' You are not going.' And I remember they [the teachers] went and talked to her. I finally went..." Patricia attended the Upward Bound Program which she considered very useful preparation for college.

Beyond the Bilingual Education Program

Patricia studied management at Boston College with a concentration in marketing. After she graduated she got a job at Merrill Lynch and began training to be a stock broker. She did very well and was well liked; however, she did not like the type of work she was doing and she decided to return to the Dominican Republic and live with her mother, who had also returned. She worked there for Citibank doing marketing research, "...and then I also worked at a medical school, in admissions, for foreign students. So that was good, in the Dominican Republic. So I was using all the skills I had learned here and I was really excited." Eventually, one of her former teachers from the college prep program contacted her in the Dominican Republic regarding a position at the Oficina Hispana, a community agency in Boston. Through the use of her contacts and experience in this area, she got the job of business manager at the agency and moved back to Boston.

Problems Encountered in the American Context

Patricia experienced problems relating to American peers and with discrimination. During her high school years, most of her friends were from Latin America. In addition to living in a Dominican neighborhood, she attended a church which had a Spanish-speaking youth group. She also had some Greek friends, "...but we were not allowed to date that much, or even to go out without a chaperone... So, I mean, you can tell that to an American guy and he is going to laugh in your face... So we didn't really know that much of the American culture and there was always that barrier." Her mother's distrust for "American dating practices" made it very difficult for Patricia to have American friends. Her mother would tell her: "I don't want you to be American in this way. I don't want you to be doing these things."

Patricia says that when she attended Boston College, she was unprepared for the experience. Her high school education had prepared her academically, but not socially for the American cultural perspective. She was particularly unprepared for interacting with American peers who came from a higher socio-economic class. She did not adjust to the environment for quite a while, because she felt she did not fit in. "It was hard because of just seeing the American culture. Actually, seeing the different social class. It was a social class that I hadn't been exposed to. Boston College is very Irish, Irish upper class. To me it seemed like upper class. The first two years were very difficult, being in that environment... My mother says that was the worst mistake she ever made by sending me to B.C. She thought that B.C. was a Catholic university [laugh]...and wrong."

The cultural differences made her uncomfortable, so her friends continued to be Latin Americans, although they too were from a higher social class. "Part of it was the culture of the students. We would go to parties...one of the things that really shocked me was the way that girls drink beer. So what can teachers do [to prepare you] for that? The school is not going to say that if you are Hispanic you will have a tough time adjusting to B.C., because the population is so Irish."

This clash of cultures brought about a momentary imbalance in her life. "I became so anti-Catholic... Maybe it is just part of growing up. I became sort of rebellious when I went to college. Luckily I came back to my faith. I think it helped me personally to see all that, I had never seen such very radical courses. For me, it was clear, that transition of sort of being free to do whatever you want to...and then reflect on it once I got out of college and then say, 'Wait a minute, I think my old ways were better.' She eventually married an American man, but initially did not even date Anglo men in college because of the cultural differences.

Patricia experienced some discrimination throughout her schooling. She felt that there was a little resentment on the part of some teachers toward Hispanics in high school, but she felt that for the most part teachers were respectful. However, she recalls, there was one teacher who was otherwise: "I think he sort of resented us because he saw all these Hispanics walking through the school... It may not have been discrimination. It may have been that he was used to his old ways." In college she had an even more unpleasant experience. Patricia's friends had informed her of a teacher who was prejudiced towards Hispanics

but she took his course anyway. "I remember the first time I was there [in class]. He [the teacher] tried to call my name and he said, 'Now what kind of name is that?' And then I said it. And he said, 'Can I call you by something else?' And I said, 'No that is my name. Call me Patricia Gutierrez.' And he said, 'I doubt it.' You know that was the course that I never worked harder for in my life and I got a D."

Importance of Cultural Values and Language in Her Life

Although Patricia was learning English and living in Boston, her culture was well maintained within the family. "At home, we would have to speak Spanish and even to this day my sister and I get together, and my mother and brother, and we speak Spanish. Most of my friends speak Spanish and that was always the case. Especially in the home, the culture was pretty much intact – cooking, the cultural activities with Dominicans – it was pretty much the way we used to do things in the Dominican Republic. So with my mother we were very traditional. It was great. I think it gave us a very good foundation for now. Myself, my family, a career, it gave us very strong values which I would like to pass on to my children."

Patricia reads to her young children in Spanish. "For me that is a treasure. That is what I try to do. When I have friends traveling I ask them to bring me back books in Spanish." Her children do not have any Spanish-speaking friends in the neighborhood, but they "speak to their cousins in Spanish, who are here." Patricia cooks Dominican and ethnic foods. "So certainly they are exposed to that. And my music, still I have been here for how many years, 16 or 17 years, and I will put on American music, but I prefer my Dominican music. So they are exposed to that. When we go back home they are exposed to the culture."

It is important to Patricia that her children are exposed to their American heritage, but she also wants them to be bilingual. "So far so good. We will see. Well, I speak Spanish, only Spanish to them." Her husband speaks to them in English. I really would want them, I do want them to speak Spanish. My husband feels the same way. It would be an asset to them when they are older." For one thing, "they have to communicate with me, (laughing) my mother and my father. I want them to know that they are part of another culture at the same time. If I can get them to do that. I do value a lot of things that I was brought up with and I would like them to have it too. I think there were a lot of different things that were family oriented, when we were

growing up. My husband and I find that we appreciate family values."

Resources

The individuals portrayed in the above case studies, as well as the other ten who were interviewed, drew upon a number of resources on their way to success in a new culture. These resources existed in their immediate environment: family, church, and neighborhood; within themselves; and in the schools they attended. In the following section, these resources will be explained and illustrated with examples drawn from all the interviewees (See Table 1, p.).

Figure 1: Resources Buttressing Bilingual Learners

Environmental	*Personal*	*Elementary/Secondary*
❶ Family	❶ Personal	❶ School
❷ Church	Characteristics	❷ Bilingual Program
❸ Neighborhood		
❹ Ethnic Community		

Resources in the Immediate Environment

- **Family**
  - Parent(s) settled ahead of the children
  - Loving and supportive
  - High expectations for achievement
  - Strong support for education
  - Positive attitude towards the native language and culture
  - Strong support for learning the second language
- **Church**
- **Neighborhood**
- **Ethnic community**

Patricia was fortunate to have a mother who arrived here, got acclimated and went through culture shock before her children arrived. In the case of Alfredo, his mother had even been able to learn some English. Parents who have first gone through the adjustment period can provide their children with a lot of support during their period of adjustment. When parents and children arrive together and are trying to adjust at the same time, the parents' tensions can make them less able to concentrate on the children. In this case, it helps to have an

extended family, as was the case with Chang, or to settle near other members of their ethnic group. Mei's parents were the only ones who did not live in an ethnic neighborhood. ""They feel miserable because they want to go somewhere they can speak Chinese. Usually they have to go to Chinatown."

One of the reasons these families moved to Massachusetts was to be able to provide their children with a better education. These parents wanted their children to give priority to their studies. Patricia's mother did not even want her to work. She was afraid that the lure of making money would distract Patricia from her studies. Chang's father was continually encouraging his children to study. "My family is very supportive of my learning. They never let me wander in the street." (Linh) "My parents didn't want me to skip school because I had a flu or something. That was no excuse. I would really get into trouble if I skipped school" (Alfredo). Because of both long work hours and insecurity about English language ability, parental involvement was very strong but home-based. The home-school connection was usually established by the bilingual program teachers, who would visit the homes.

Except for Alfredo's mother, all of the families made a practice of speaking the native language at home to ensure family communication. Elisa's parents made it very clear that, "...you will never speak English in the house, you speak Spanish in the house because we need to be able to communicate, and we can speak English anywhere." At the same time, these parents wanted their children to learn English, to get to know other people, and to adjust to the new environment.

The church and youth groups gave Patricia a culturally safe setting in which to interact socially. Coming from strong religious traditions, these parents were often more willing to allow their teen-age children to attend activities within the context of the church. The local churches use native languages to provide a level of familiarity for recent immigrants. Chang alternates attendance at Vietnamese and Chinese churches as a chance to practice both languages.

Living in culturally congruent neighborhoods provided the students and their families with a ready-made network which helped facilitate adjustment to the new culture. In addition, because the parents could rely on other adults in the community for translation and other help, the children's schooling was usually not disturbed. Felicia is the only student who recalls accompanying her mother to the doctor

as an interpreter. "It got to the point where I was going with people that my mother knew, who didn't speak English, and had no one to go with them."

Personal Resources

- ❖ Strong native language and literacy background
- ❖ Strong academic background in the native language
- ❖ Some knowledge of English
- ❖ Strong motivation to maintain native language and culture
- ❖ Positive attitude towards the native language and culture
- ❖ Strong motivation to learn the second language
- ❖ High motivation to achieve

When Patricia entered school in Massachusetts she was fully literate in her native language and had a strong foundation in the content areas. Chang developed these skills in the bilingual program with the support of the family. The same applied to the other participants. Those who arrived at the upper elementary through high school levels showed a strong native language and academic background. Those who arrived at a younger age developed these skills with the support of the bilingual program and their families. Only three students knew some English before entering the bilingual program. Mei had taken English in school before coming to the United States; Alfredo started learning it from neighborhood friends the summer before starting school; and Linh attended a mainstream program in Houston before coming to Massachusetts.

All of these students were highly motivated to learn English while they continued to value their bilingualism: "W. need to get this English down pat..." recalls Felicia while at the same time, "My Portuguese and Cape Verdean I kept up..." In the case of Felicia her motivation to learn English was enhanced by her desire to help her family. "My family needed it and I couldn't stand to see my family go to a place and get stuck and not get what they wanted." Alfredo initially felt more motivated to develop his second language than to preserve his first. He felt the need to concentrate on English language development first and then, "...later on, you can go back to your roots." Later in life he found the native language to be very useful at work and so he has had to make an effort to develop it again.

They all continue to use their languages both at work and in their family and social life. "Knowing more than one language helped me

succeed in my education, because it always gave me more than one cultural perspective on any issue... It helps you to expand your vision of the world."(Alfredo) They are passing – or will pass – on to their children their pride for their native languages. "Believe me, if I'm married to an English [speaking] woman or Spanish or whatever, my children will speak the Creole language. They are not going to lose it. Even my great-grandchildren, I would not speak to them in English." (Luciano) They all have great pride in their cultural heritage. "It's a necessity to learn about your roots, to learn about your culture." (Lihn) Even when in some cases they went through a period of ambivalence. As an adolescent, Helena rejected Greek and spoke only English at home and in school. However, in high school she enrolled for three years of Ancient Greek history and culture courses. This experience helped change her attitude, and now she is glad to be bilingual. Their positive experiences with bilingualism makes them want to raise their children bilingually.

All students interviewed worked very hard to do well in school. "One thing I did when I was in school and in the bilingual program was that I wanted to make sure that I took all the courses that would enable me to go to college," says Alfredo. "I did not want to have any of those study periods where you just sit and do nothing." Awards, student government positions and finally scholarships to good colleges were among the rewards they received for their hard work and tenacity. Several took summer courses to improve their English and night courses at local colleges to feel more challenged.

Elementary School Resources

- ❖ Several years of participation in the bilingual program
- ❖ L1 literacy development
- ❖ Content area instruction in L1
- ❖ Intensive English instruction
- ❖ Use of English in relation to content area
- ❖ Participation in an advanced program
- ❖ Qualified, caring, demanding teachers
- ❖ Cultural congruence between teachers and students
- ❖ Comfort of bilingual peers

Most of the students participated in the bilingual program for three to five years with partial mainstreaming towards the latter years. Their programs included a number of effective teaching strategies that con-

tributed to academic success. These strategies included the use of both the student's first and second languages to teach academic material, the teaching of reading and writing in the first language, and good English instruction.

The program used Chang's first language to teach content-area material, ensuring that concept development did not lag while his language skills caught up. In other cases, the use of the student's native language was primarily for clarification purposes during content-area instruction. "They were trying to teach... in English, but if you didn't understand anything, you could get it explained in Greek." (Helena) "The classes were taught in our language, but when it came to English the teacher translated for us into Portuguese and Cape Verdean Creole" (Noemia).

Their bilingual programs also included first language literacy as an essential component. Helena recalls Greek reading, writing and spelling being taught, and says that today, she can "...read, write and speak Greek fluently, although I do make some spelling mistakes." Most of the students recall receiving intensive, structured, and clear English instruction. They also felt their program was academically rigorous. Most of the elementary students attended advanced classes with native English speakers later in their education. Luciano, although not in an advanced program, remembered a highly demanding program: "We had lots of homework and assignments."

Chang's program was implemented by what he called a "wonderful" staff. The teachers were stable, qualified, demanding and caring. They established an atmosphere of sensitivity, encouragement, and high expectation, and willingly fulfilled a variety of non-teaching roles for their students. The teachers were translators, tutors, intermediaries, advocates, and role models. They put forth the considerable effort needed to teach literacy in two languages in addition to a full course of content-area studies. They also reinforced the children's first language and culture.

One of the teachers' most important contributions was the creation of an atmosphere highly conducive to learning. "The teachers were very caring. They wanted you to learn... they were more attentive, more aware of the problems." (Linh) Noemia said that their school principal did not care for the bilingual students at all, but they survived because "...the principal was afraid of [the bilingual teacher]." Helena said: "I will remember them for the rest of my life." Chang, Patricia

and most of the other students have kept in touch with their bilingual teachers. Helena said she "went out with them to lunch" recently, and Luciano, who left the program about 20 years ago, still sees his teacher "at least once or twice a year."

Most of the students who attended the bilingual program at the elementary level had teachers of the same cultural and linguistic background who therefore became role models as well. Both of Chang's teachers were also Vietnamese, and "it helped a lot." He derived comfort from the fact that his teachers had been through the same process. Luciano remembered, "She set up a standard for me to follow." This sensitivity aids in the formation of a positive classroom attitude toward both languages and cultures.

The teachers communicated their high expectations in an atmosphere of affectionate support. Chang remembers thinking at the time that he hated his teachers, because they pushed the students so hard; he has since changed his view to a smiling recognition of their appropriately high expectations. These high expectations were a constant in all of the bilingual programs represented. Vy explained, "'Bilingual' meaning it's just a different language, so the teacher can speak to you in your language so you will understand what he is talking about, but it doesn't mean you have to take lower courses." Noemia, who has an associate's degree, had to promise one of her teachers that she would finish college some day. Helena sums it up: "They expected a lot, they cared." Chang attributed his survival to his teachers' demanding, yet caring help. They pushed him hard to do well, and they were models of success themselves.

Being with bilingual peers offered these students a sense of identity and a haven in a sometimes-hostile school world. Chang's equanimity in the face of unkind laughter may have been founded in the knowledge that he did have "some Vietnamese people around that he could relate to." Chang remembers his bilingual peers with fondness, saying, "Fellow students, you can talk to them, and you can play with them at recess, and with studying, you can also share trying to converse [in English] with each other, and, if you don't understand, you can turn back to Vietnamese." Luciano explains: "When I got transferred to the bilingual program, I felt like I was with my own people. It was much more comfortable, and ...more relaxing, and conducive to learning." In addition, they felt comfortable learning English with their own peers. "I felt very comfortable in that classroom and I could speak both Greek

and English and if I made a mistake in English they corrected me and I wouldn't feel very embarrassed. (Helena)"

Secondary School Resources

- ❖ Mainstream teachers who tailored courses to their needs and used the bilingual students' talents
- ❖ Some efforts to integrate mainstream and bilingual students
- ❖ Bilingual program included college preparatory courses
- ❖ Bilingual program offered content-area courses in the native language and ESL
- ❖ Courses and field trips helped students get acquainted with their new environment
- ❖ Caring and dedicated teachers and counselor
- ❖ High teacher expectations
- ❖ Support from peers in the bilingual program

Aware of the students' particular needs, Patricia's Spanish teacher developed an advanced Spanish course for native speakers and advanced American students. This gave the message to the students that they were noticed beyond the bilingual program and that they had something to offer to the school. Their needs were considered important enough to adjust the curriculum in interesting ways. This, however, was more the exception than the rule with respect to mainstream teachers.

At Patricia's high school, some limited efforts were made to bridge the gap, such as inviting Spanish-speaking students to join the Spanish club and thus interact with American students learning Spanish. As members of honor groups or student government, biligual program students could interact with mainstream students. Some general classes such as gym and typing offered a physical environment for integration.

The College Prep program prepared Patricia, Mei, Elisa, Maria Cristina and Alfredo with the specific skills they needed for college. It also helped them to select and apply to colleges.

The bilingual program offered content courses in the native language, allowing students to continue learning in courses which avoided the stress of trying to learn in the second language. This provided a balance to the courses taught in English, and helped them get adjusted to their new environment. Field trips to local museums and historical sites helped the students get acquainted with the history and culture of

the area. Mei felt these field trips were important because they couldn't have done it on their own. "You don't know the place when you are a recent immigrant, and you don't know any places around. Besides you don't have a car, you don't know how to take the T to go, even if the Museum of Science is easy to go to, right?."

Their bilingual teachers acted as surrogate parents going beyond teaching the curriculum. They were interested in the well-being of the students, in helping them adjust to the new environment, and in helping them succeed academically. In the case of Felicia, it was the bilingual teacher who provided the motivation to go on to higher education. She still reminds Felicia, who has an Associate Degree that, "I don't care how long it takes, you have to complete your four-year college." These teachers respected their students' cultural and linguistic background, encouraging them to learn English without devaluing their language and culture. Describing one of her teachers Maria Cristina summarizes all these qualities: "Nos dio la oportunidad de concocernos a nosotros mismos, y sentirnos cómodos de decir, 'tenemos sueños y vamos a alcanzar esos sueños'." (She gave us the opportunity to know ourselves and allowed us to feel comfortable expressing our dreams. She made us believe that we could accomplish these dreams.) When necessary, Patricia's teacher would contact her mother. Parents who are very busy and are not fully proficient in English tend to shy away from the schools. These bilingual program teachers helped bridge that gap. The bond between them and their students has been long lasting: "We were very close. I remember the last year, my senior year, a friend and I went to her [the teacher's] house. And then after we graduated from high school, we still keep in touch. She was very helpful." (Mei)

The bilingual teachers also smoothed relations with mainstream teachers. Mei's bilingual teacher, "...would discuss us students with the regular class teacher. That way he would know more about the students' growth in the regular classes." They even acted as advocates. When Elisa was unjustly accused by a mainstream teacher of stealing a tape recorder, the bilingual teacher "started yelling at the mainstream teacher and told him how petrified I was from his yelling and accusations." Alfredo sums it up well when he says that, "[t]he teachers were incredible. I see them now and I tell them how good they were."

Being members of a college-bound group made Patricia and her peers feel special. They considered themselves academically advanced, and made demands on themselves and their teachers. They also sup-

ported each other when they started taking courses in English. Similar camaraderie was experienced by Alfredo, Elisa and Felicia. Mei went on to college with her best friend. While in high school, "we studied together and discussed about what school [college] we should go to..." Support from teachers and peers are two factors that help students cope with difficult academic situations.

Problems

The individuals interviewed had – and some still have – problems dealing with the American culture and relating to American peers. "The American culture is very individualistic; in my culture people are really together. A community helps mom and dad raise their children. Here if you don't look after your own, forget it." (Noemia) Vy expressed another cultural contrast when he observed the behavior of the fans at a Boston Garden sporting event: "People were screaming, yelling. I was sitting there and the game wasn't that good." He sees Vietnamese as "a little bit conservative" in their behavior. He thinks that Vietnamese are "subconscious [sic] about other people and what they are going to think.."

Most students, except for Luciano, had difficulty relating to American students. In the case of Patricia, this problem was exacerbated by her mother's distrust of American youth, especially boys. Vy says, "I don't get along with American kids...it's kind of hard either to understand them or they understand me...everything they say, everything they do seems so carefree..." These students encountered an unfriendly environment outside the bilingual program and their close circle of family and friends. Chang remembers, "At recess, you would find that there would be some arguments between American and Vietnamese... There were racial slurs and stuff like that... They [the American students] used to call us boat people... they gave us a hard time. They asked you, 'what are you doing here'?" (Noemia) Both Noemia and Helena were affected by these experiences and for a while rejected their native language and culture. "I felt embarrassed" confessed Noemia, "because at that time it wasn't cool that you were from another country." Therefore, for a while she wouldnot use her native language except at home. Helena recalls that during middle school, "We just spoke English at home and at school everywhere." These feelings did not last long and now they both function as fully bilingual individuals.

Students felt that although the bilingual program had been excellent in preparing them academically for college, they were not prepared to deal socially with their American peers. This problem is related to the school's structure as a whole. There was minimal integration between the bilingual and mainstream programs. At the middle school level, the students felt that the program was totally isolated. Students did not feel accepted by the principal or their English-speaking peers. At the high-school level, there was some effort made by some teachers, but most efforts to diminish the TBE program isolation were made by the bilingual students themselves.

Negative attitudes among mainstream staff and students did not facilitate easy relations among bilingual and mainstream students. Several of the women interviewed experienced difficulty relating to American peers and teachers, making attendance in mainstream classes difficult. Maria Cristina did not feel comfortable until the senior year in high school, her sixth year in Massachusetts schools. "I had friends," recalls Elisa, "...that didn't dare walk into a monolingual class because they were scared and embarrassed. And if they had an accent it was worse." This fear was not unfounded. Students suffered some discrimination from both teachers and students. "I felt that I was discriminated by him [a mainstream teacher]. He always picked on us Chinese students. I felt that he tried to insult us by different means. That's what I felt... I don't know if that was true." (Mae) A mainstream teacher saw Elisa carrying a tape recorder she had borrowed from her sister. He pulled her out of the bilingual classroom without telling the teacher "...and starts yelling at me and I just put my head down. Well, that just made it worse. He kept going on and on. And at this point I am crying. He was accusing me of stealing this tape recorder. I just wouldn't answer any of his questions." Elisa did not feel any better around mainstream students because they "...have an attitude that you [students in the bilingual program] know less than they do and that you are not up to their standards." Even with enough English to be put in mainstream classes, Mei did not always feel comfortable there. "I felt that we didn't know how to handle the teacher because the teacher asked us some questions or asked us to respond or whatever, we just sat there and felt so strange." When comparing their behavior in the bilingual classes, Mei thought that ,"you participated more so you learned more."

Part of the students' inability to socialize with Americans was

related to gender. Alfredo was able to go out in the neighborhood and make English-speaking friends very quickly. "My first three friends were Americans... we played together for about three months [in the summer] and I learned a lot of English just playing with them." They helped him learn the language and begin to understand the culture in a relaxed social setting. The girls, on the other hand, were more restricted. "[C]omo era peligroso no salíamos a jugar afuera, ni participábamos en muchas actividades que ofrecía el departamento de recreación..." (because it was too dangerous we did not go play outside nor did we participate in activities organized by the recreation department) (Maria Cristina). They usually played at home or in church-organized youth groups with children of their same ethnic group. In addition, cross-cultural differences gender roles made it difficult for them to have a social life with American peers. In college, this was compounded in some cases by differences in social class. Thus, neither the school nor the neighborhood facilitated cultural adjustment for the girls.

Conclusion

Our criteria in selecting successful bilingual individuals were limited to academic and career success. As we analyzed their stories, we discovered that these individuals cherished their bilingualism and their cultural heritage. They also felt a strong desire to help their community and others who are presently going through the same struggles they experienced. Thus, the lives of these individuals illustrate that preservation of the native language and culture are not incompatible with success in the United States.

For the individuals interviewed for this study, the strength of their families, neighborhood and church provided the support for their personal resources to develop and flourish. The bilingual education program further encouraged their identity as bilingual bicultural individuals and prepared them for higher education and the world of work. "Si no hubiese sido por el programa bilingüe no hubiésemos terminado la escuela superior ni tampoco hubiésemos triunfado." (Cristina) (If it hadn't been for the bilingual program we [her siblings and herself] would not have finished high school nor succeeded in life).

This study underscores the importance of the influence of environmental and personal factors in shaping the lives of these individuals.

Their stories also suggest how educational resources impact on bilingual students. Two major educational factors allowed these students to develop: 1) a supportive atmosphere and 2) caring although demanding bilingual program teachers. Within the bilingual program, students felt that their native language and culture were held in high esteem and their performance as ESL learners was supported. As Helena summarized her experience: "I felt very comfortable in that [bilingual] classroom... I could speak both Greek and English and if I made a mistake in English they corrected me and I wouldn't feel embarrassed about it. I had a lot of my friends there who were Greek as well and we had fun..." The bilingual program teachers played a key role in the students' ability to progress in school and cope with the new environment. Their high expectations led them to create advanced and demanding programs or to help students participate in accelerated programs offered by the mainstream.

The one weakness common to the schooling experiences of our interviewees was the lack of acceptance of the bilingual program, its staff and students within the whole school community. This, in turn, helps to explain the problems of adjustment to American culture and the difficulties making American friends experienced by many of those interviewed.

The experiences of these individuals suggest that their personal courage and determination as well as family support provided the essential ingredients for their success. They also point to the role played by bilingual education programs in supporting their personal and academic development. Our findings suggest, moreover, that schools need to do more to facilitate communication and cultural understanding among students and staff of all backgrounds.

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